

Budget Unit Brief

FY 2017



Conservation Cost Share Program

Purpose and History

The Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Cost Share Program began in 1973 to provide financial assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts with the intent to protect and control soil erosion. There are 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts that implement the Program and distribute funds around Iowa. Each county has a Soil and Water Conservation District, with the exception of Pottawattamie County, where there are two Districts.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are legal subdivisions of the state government and are responsible for carrying out state law and programs within district boundaries that include:

- Sediment control law
- Conservation cost-sharing
- Conservation revolving loan funds
- Water quality protection projects
- Resource Enhancement and Protection projects

Districts also play a key role in carrying out federal programs including but not limited to:

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- Conservation compliance
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Conservation planning

Funding History

The Soil and Water Conservation Cost Share Program was funded with General Fund money until FY 2001, when the Environment First Fund (EFF) was created by the General Assembly. In FY 2001, \$2.0 million was funded from the EFF and \$5.5 million was from the General Fund. Funding since then:

- FY 2002 to FY 2010 – EFF.
- FY 2011 – EFF and Revenue Bonds Capitals Fund.
- FY 2012 to FY 2017 – EFF.
- For FY 2013, there was a supplemental appropriation of \$7.0 million.

Soil and Water Conservation Cost Share funds appropriated are primarily used to implement soil and water conservation practices; however, allocations in past years included:

- Up to 15.0% for administration and costs.
- Up to 5.0% to address complaints filed for land erosion caused by sediment.
- Requires 5.0% for financial incentives to protect watersheds above publicly owned lakes from soil erosion and sediment.
- Up to \$50,000 for administration of the Watershed Improvement Review Board.
- Up to 30.0% to control soil erosion on land that is row-cropped.

More Information

Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Soil Conservation: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/soilConservation.asp>

Conservation Districts of Iowa: <http://www.cdiowa.org>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>

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Administrative rules related to Soil and Water Conservation Cost Share Funds specify:

- The Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has four years to encumber or obligate the funds.
- Ninety percent of the funds are used for approved permanent soil and water conservation practices. Examples of conservation practices include:
 - Channel stabilization that uses conservation structures to stabilize a stream channel.
 - Wetland construction that uses vegetation to filter water for treatment of wastewater or contaminated runoff from agricultural processing or livestock.
 - A riparian buffer that includes an area of trees and/or shrubs adjacent to a body of water. The buffer creates shade to lower water temperatures to improve habitats for aquatic animals and acts as a buffer to filter out sediment, organic material, fertilizer, pesticides, and other pollutants.
 - A sediment basin that is constructed to collect and store waterborne debris or sediment.

Related Statutes

[Iowa Code chapter 161A](#)

[27](#) Iowa Administrative Code chapters [10](#), [11](#), and [12](#)

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